

Tilburg University

Ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions and language revitalisation in Bashkortostan

Yagmur, K.; Kroon, S.

Published in:
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development

Publication date:
2003

[Link to publication in Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Yagmur, K., & Kroon, S. (2003). Ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions and language revitalisation in Bashkortostan. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 24(4), 319-336.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Ethnolinguistic Vitality Perceptions and Language Revitalization in Bashkortostan

Kutlay Yagmur & Sjaak Kroon

Babylon, Tilburg University, PO Box 90153, 5000 LE Tilburg, The Netherlands

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russification process has mostly ended in the former Soviet Republics and in the present Russian Federation Republics. In some regions, strong mother tongue revitalization efforts are witnessed. In this article, the relationship between ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions and the language revitalization process of Bashkortostan is examined. The theoretical framework of the study is based on Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor (1977) ethnolinguistic vitality theory and Edwards' (1992) typology of minority language situation. In line with these, the ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire was administered to 250 Bashkir informants. Regardless of their background, rural or urban, Bashkir informants perceived Russian and Bashkir vitality similarly. Contrary to expectations, Bashkir vitality was found to be high. In parallel, in interviews with key informants (educational experts and policy makers), a strong language revitalization movement was observed.

Introduction

In this paper, language revitalization efforts of Bashkortostan and the relationship between ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions and mother tongue consciousness will be discussed¹. Along with many other Turkic languages, Bashkir, which has been in contact with Russian since the 16th century, has been under its heavy influence for over a century. Russification processes caused a forced shift to Russian among many titular nationalities. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the Russification process has mostly ended and there is a growing mother tongue consciousness among many titular nations in the Russian Federation. In this paper, we propose the usefulness of combining the typology of minority language situations developed by Edwards (1992) and ethnolinguistic vitality theory (EVT) developed by Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor (1977). EVT is derived from Tajfel's (1974) intergroup relations theory and Giles' speech accommodation theory (Giles and Powesland, 1975). Edward's taxonomic-typological model is exploratory in nature. "It seeks distinctions rather than concentrating on those issues that present themselves as factors of language shift in the situation being researched." (Clyne, 2003: 54). In his latest evaluation of various models of language maintenance and shift, Clyne suggests that the model of Edwards (1992) may be more useful across a wide range of linguistic minority situations, not just specifically immigrant ones. In this study, Edwards' (1992) typology was utilized to find answers for the issues of demographic characteristics, political status of languages spoken in Bashkortostan, the nature of the language transmission to young generations, language teaching practices and so on. In detailed interviews with key informants, we used the model questions from Edwards' typology to get an overview of the language situation in Bashkortostan. The subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire developed by Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal (1981) was utilized to collect data on the attitudes of the Bashkir speakers. In the following

sections, on the basis of Edwards' (1992) model, an objective profile of the Bashkir language group is provided. The findings on subjective ethnolinguistic vitality data in Bashkortostan will be presented against the background of a brief overview of Russification policies and language revitalization efforts in Bashkortostan. Finally, the relevance of our findings for Bashkir language revitalization as well as the establishment of multiculturalism in Bashkortostan will be presented.

Russification and language revitalization in Bashkortostan

According to Carmichael (2000:266), "all the non-Russian ethnic and linguistic groups now share a complex relationship with the formerly dominant language of the region, Russian, and the post-communist period is characterized by a process of coming to terms with centuries of Russian hegemony and the ubiquitous presence of Russian speakers." The processes that are central in this context, that is, language revival, language revitalization and reversing shift are often referred to interchangeably in the literature. We agree with the conceptual distinction suggested by Paulston and Chen (1993) that revival, revitalization, and reversal are separate phenomena which can be subsumed under the concept of language regeneration. Language revival literally is the collection of efforts to give life to a dead language, or to a language that had not been in use for a long period of time. As different from language revival, revitalization has to do with a language that has been in restricted use. In this respect, Bashkir efforts can be seen as an example of language revitalization. The Bashkir language came under complete Russian domination during the Soviet period and it was limited to the domestic domain in most cases. The restrictions on the use of Bashkir caused a forced shift to Russian among younger generations. The Bashkir language has never lost its local value, especially among rural populations, but the domination of Russian in education limited the functional use of Bashkir, which resulted in Russian spreading swiftly. A language spoken by a group of people is not only a means of communication. Language lies at the heart of a nation's education system, culture, and identity. Languages are associated with national identity and, for many cultures; language is a core value (see, e.g., Smolicz, 1984). Identity provides a sense of security, belongingness and feelings of common heritage. It can be expressed through dress, religious beliefs, customs and traditions, yet language can always be a cornerstone of identity formation and identity display. A language needs to be used in many social, educational, scientific and cultural domains so that it can develop and flourish. However, Bashkir people were never allowed to use their language for public or educational purposes. Their language was mostly confined to the domestic domain.

In order to understand the past and present of the linguistic situation in Bashkortostan, Soviet language policies and intense assimilation measures need to be documented. Language planning is a set of "deliberate efforts to influence the behavior of others with respect to the acquisition, structure, or functional allocation of their language codes" (Cooper, 1989:45). In this respect, Soviet language policies were conscious and planned actions to control and manipulate language acquisition in the Soviet Union. Very soon after the Revolution, policy makers started to deliberately implement policies to replace local national languages with Russian. Soviet language policies can be distinguished into

three different stages: the initial period (from 1920s to late 1950s), a severe assimilation period (from 1958 through the 1980s), and a disintegration period (from 1980s until *perestroika*).

In its early stages, official discourse in the Soviet Union supported minority languages. All languages had equal status according to Leninist ideology but this position changed rather quickly. In the years 1936-1937, the Soviet government took the decision to change all writing systems used by different linguistic groups, some of which had been first changed from Arabic to Latin, into Cyrillic. Change of alphabet made the acquisition of Russian easier for titular nationalities, but literacy acquisition in the mother tongue had become extremely difficult for certain language groups. Soviet policy makers considered education to be the most effective means to spread communist ideology. Schools were established in a short period of time, but almost all of the teachers were monolingual Russian speakers. Existing teaching learning materials were all in Russian and there were no materials for indigenous languages. In multi-ethnic regions, such as Altai, Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and so forth, a model of boarding schools was implemented and children from non-Russian speaking backgrounds were especially sent to these. There, Russian was the *lingua franca* and speaking any other language was strictly prohibited. The ultimate goal of these boarding schools was to create a generation which had little knowledge of its heritage language and culture. In this initial period, there were still provisions for the teaching of indigenous languages but in the Educational Reform of 1958, these were eliminated (Clause 19). Even though all languages had an equal status in Leninist policy, there were debates about the relative importance of various languages in this period of assimilation.

More intense, and aggressive Russification policies mark the second period of Soviet language policies. The ideology was to create a Soviet people and a *homo sovieticus* without linguistic, ethnic, or cultural divisions. Education was, again, the most effective means to achieve Russification. The number of teaching hours for education in native languages was reduced, and in some regions totally eliminated. In the schools, children were not allowed to speak in a language other than Russian. Stalin was the mastermind behind these policies, but they were further intensified and expanded by Khrushchev and Brezhnev. Even though Haarman (1992) claims that the latter softened Stalin's harsh assimilation policies, the actual practice shows that, after the 1960s, Russian forcefully replaced all other languages in schools. Under these severe assimilation policies, the use of native languages was confined only to a very few domains, thereby lowering the functional value and prestige of them. In sum, Russian became the only accepted language for educational and socio-economic mobility and in public institutions, and the media.

Extreme Russification has continued until the late 1980s. However, starting from the mid-1980s, there was increased restlessness among titular nationalities, which marked the beginning of the third period. People were not able to practice their religion, customs and traditions, which were increasingly being protested. Especially, not being able to teach their own languages was one of the main causes of disturbance among native peoples (Guboglo, 1994). According to Hagendoorn, Drogendijk, Tumanov and Hraba (1998),

under Gorbachev it was understood that the policy of Sovietisation had failed. Hagendoorn *et al.* (1998) also claim that Russians could not actually achieve full assimilation of non-Russian speaking peoples. Only among deported migrants, assimilation was higher but among indigenous peoples, this rate was rather low.

In spite of harsh assimilation policies, many titular nationalities resisted Russification. Especially in rural areas, implementing assimilation policies was not easy. According to Graney (1999:619), "many of the 'national' schools in urban areas in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan were forced to close or to switch to Russian-language education in the 1970s, though both republics retained a large rural base of national schools until the end of the Soviet period". The informants in this study also confirmed Graney's claim that in spite of a widespread shift to Russian among younger generations, there was a sense of belonging to the Bashkir group, and that the Bashkir language was generally maintained in small villages and towns. Irrespective of the rate of linguistic assimilation, one thing is absolute: many nationalities under Soviet rule suffered from language loss. As Schlyter (1998) documents in detail (for the Uzbek context), Russian exerted lexical and semantic influence on Turkic languages. This long-standing influence would not disappear in a short period but there were serious efforts for language revitalization in these regions.

Ethnolinguistic vitality and language maintenance

Instead of listing the many factors involved in language vitality of an ethnolinguistic group, Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) proposed a three-factor model of ethnolinguistic vitality containing status, demographic, and institutional support factors in order to develop a framework for investigating the role of socio-structural variables in inter-group relations, cross-cultural communication, second language learning, mother tongue maintenance, language shift and loss. Ethnolinguistic vitality theory is a social psychological approach to the relationship between language and identity. The vitality of an ethnolinguistic group is defined as "that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations" (Giles *et al.*, 1977:308). According to Giles *et al.* (1977), status, demographic, and institutional support factors combine to make up the vitality of an ethnolinguistic group. A group's strengths and weaknesses in each of these domains could be assessed so as to provide a rough classification of ethnolinguistic groups as having *low*, *medium*, or *high vitality*. Low vitality groups are most likely to go through linguistic assimilation and would, in the end, not be considered a distinctive collective group (Bourhis, Giles and Rosenthal, 1981). In contrast, high vitality groups are likely to maintain their language and distinctive cultural traits in multilingual settings. It is argued, however, that if the group members identify strongly with their community, in spite of low ethnolinguistic vitality perceptions, a minority group might find an adequate strategy for the survival of the group (Giles & Johnson, 1987; Giles & Viladot, 1994).

Bourhis, Giles, & Rosenthal (1981) proposed that group members' subjective vitality perceptions of each of the vitality variables may be as important as the group's 'objective' vitality. This perception led to the construction of a Subjective Ethnolinguistic Vitality Questionnaire (SEVQ). By this means, it is possible to measure how group members

actually perceive their own group and out-groups on important vitality items. Johnson, Giles and Bourhis (1983) argue that objective and subjective vitality provide a starting-point from which the difficult link between sociological (collective) and social psychological (individual) accounts of language, ethnicity, and inter-group relations can be explored. In the last decade, empirical work has begun to test the usefulness of the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality as a research tool (e.g., Bourhis and Sachdev, 1984; Giles, Rosenthal and Young, 1985; Pittam, Gallois and Willemyns, 1991; Willemyns, Pittam and Gallois, 1993; Yagmur, De Bot and Korzilius, 1999). The findings from these studies claim strong empirical support for the social psychological nature of the concepts of both objective and perceived ethnolinguistic vitality, but there is also considerable discussion of various aspects of the theory and its application in empirical research. In addition to Bourhis *et al.*'s (1981) SEVQ, we decided to use the relevant items from Edwards' (1992) typology during the interviews with the key informants.

Edwards' typology classifies a number of variables that are relevant to language contact situations along two focal parameters: group characteristics and individual characteristics of the group members. Along these two parameters 33 items concerning demographic, sociological, linguistic, psychological, historical, political, geographical, educational, religious, and economic characteristics of the group and the region are formulated. On the basis of these questions, relevant data on numbers and concentration of speakers, the distribution of speakers in rural and urban areas, degree and type of language transmission to younger generations, degree of language standardization, language attitudes of speakers, aspects of language-identity relationships, history and background of the groups as well as the languages in the region, degree and extent of official recognition of the languages, speakers' attitudes and involvement regarding education, language representation in the media, and so on are to be gathered. For a comprehensive treatment of the typology, see Edwards (1992).

Although Edwards' typology was found to be viable in recent language maintenance and shift studies (Grenoble and Whaley, 1998; Smolicz, Secombe, and Hudson, 2001; Yagmur, 2001), we could certainly add more questions and variables to the above domains and levels related to ethnolinguistic vitality of the group such as, for instance, ingroup characteristics (collective vs. individualist nature of the group, see e.g., Harris Russell, 2001), marriage patterns (see Yagmur, 1997), availability of national days specific to the group and importance of those days, and the role of traditional and material culture in the maintenance of linguistic characteristics (Grenoble and Whaley, 1998). Also, the degree of codification and standardization of the ethnic language, its status in the schools, and the availability and the quality of materials for teaching at schools or for self-study are some other issues to be addressed. Especially in a Russian dominant context, the suitability of the script for learning and teaching of 'ethnic' languages is an important question to be dealt with.

Edwards' (1992) typology provides objective factual vitality information that is highly necessary in language maintenance and shift studies. Giles *et al.*'s (1977) model requires both objective and subjective vitality data on the linguistic groups studied. Combining these two perspectives is obvious, because Edwards' questions are mostly group-related

and Giles *et al.*'s model is highly suitable for the measurement of individual attitudes and perceptions. In this way, objective and subjective data on ethnolinguistic vitality of the group can be combined with language use and choice data, with the result that a highly accurate linguistic depiction can be obtained. In our field study in Bashkortostan, we mainly use Edwards' typology to collect information, via document analysis and expert interviews, on issues such as demographic characteristics, political status of the languages spoken, the nature of the language transmission to young generations, language teaching practices and so on (for a list of the questions used during the interviews with the expert informants, see Appendix 1). By means of Bourhis' *et al.*'s ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire, we will be documenting the subjective perceptions (attitudes) of Bashkir speech community members towards their ethnic language and towards Russian.

Objective data on ethnolinguistic vitality in Bashkortostan

This section contains an overview of the sociolinguistic situation in Bashkortostan. In drawing this picture, we approximately follow the issues brought up in Edwards' typology. Data collection took mainly place via document analysis and interviews with experts from Bashkortostan².



Historical background

With its rich natural resources (especially oil and gas), the Republic of Bashkortostan is one of the most important regions in the Russian Federation (but also a very polluted 'ecological waste land'). It covers an area of 143.600 square kilometers between the Volga and the Urals (see map). According to 1993 figures, its population is 4,055 million. The main territory of the Bashkirs is the Federal Republic of Bashkortostan, but even there, they are far outnumbered by Russians. According to Grimes (2000), there are around one million Bashkirs in different countries and 901,150 (67%) of Bashkirs live in the Russian Federation. However, according to the Soviet Census statistics of 1989, there

were 1,345,300 Bashkirs living on the territory of the Russian Federation, of which 863,808 (64.21%) live in Bashkortostan, 161,169 (11.98%) in Chelyabinsk, 53,339 (3.96%) in Orenburg, 52,326 (3.89%) in Perm, 41,500 (3.08%) in Sverdlovsk, 41,059 (3.05%) in Tyumen, 19,106 (1.42%) in Tatarstan, 17,548 (1.30%) in Kurgan, 5,417 (0.40%) in Moscow, 3,893 (0.29%) in Irkutsk, 3,014 (0.22%) in St. Petersburg, and 2,138 (0.16%) in Chita. On the basis of the 1989 Soviet Census, it is reported that three major groups live on Bashkir territory: Russians (39%), Tatars (28%), and Bashkirs (22%) with the majority of the Russians residing in Ufa (the capital city of Bashkortostan). In different rural areas, yet, Bashkirs and Tatars are in majority. The number of Bashkirs in the urban areas, however, is growing (from 10% in 1970 to 14.5% in 1989).

The Bashkirs settled their land under the Mongol Khanate of Kipchak from the 13th to the 15th century. After the overthrow of the Kazan Khanate by Tsar Ivan IV the Terrible in 1552, the region passed into the hands of Russians. They founded Ufa in 1574 and, thereafter, the colonization of the region started. In spite of many Bashkir uprisings, Russians severely suppressed and dispossessed Bashkirs. In the 18th century, copper and iron production began in the area. In line with colonization and centralization policies, many Russian immigrants were sent to the region. In the 19th century, industrialization began and new Russian immigrants came to the region, because of which Bashkirs became a minority group in their own territory. During the 19th century, through pressure by Russian colonists and colonial policy, the Bashkirs settled, gave up nomadic life and developed a primary dependence on agriculture. After the communist revolution of 1917, the region was made an autonomous Republic in 1919. The borders of this new autonomous Soviet Republic included regions with high numbers of Tatars, making Bashkirs the third largest group. The 1930s saw a rise of oil industries with further immigration from other regions as a consequence, and a decline of the Bashkir people to less than 25% of the population. In the same period, part of the national Bashkir elite became a victim of the Stalin regime (Grävingholt, 1999a). In the cities, Bashkir language had no functions whatsoever; it was mostly confined to rural areas.

In the 1990 elections, with the rest of the Soviet Union, communists lost power in Bashkortostan as well. Murtaza Rakhimov became the president of the Supreme Soviet in Bashkortostan. According to Grävingholt (1999a), his Bashkir origin played an important role in his election which, in turn, was an important factor in slow re-awakening of Bashkir national consciousness in Bashkortostan. Under the leadership of Rakhimov, a new constitution for Bashkortostan was written. After long discussions in January 1999, Bashkortostan's parliament adopted a law on language (Chapter I, Article 3), which named Bashkir and Russian as the official state languages in Bashkortostan. The new constitution also promoted the teaching of native languages in primary and secondary schools (Chapter II, Article 8). Even though neighboring Tatarstan made the study of the Tatar language compulsory for children of all backgrounds, President Rakhimov was against the mandatory study of the Bashkir language in Bashkortostan. The study of the Bashkir language was, and still is, officially encouraged for all citizens on a voluntary basis (Graney, 1999).

The linguistic situation in Bashkortostan is complicated in many respects. Even though the Bashkir and the Tatar languages are mutually intelligible (Grimes, 2000), they have always been regarded as different ethno-cultural groups. During the Soviet period, due to Russification policies, the Bashkir language had no role in business, science, education and written literature. According to Laitin (1995:291), “the Soviets even created a distinct Bashkir literary language and allowed the Bashkirs access to education in their native Bashkir tongue until the tenth grade as a means to prevent a Bashkir-Tatar merger. This was done at a time when a third of all Bashkirs already considered Tatar their native language”. Findings reported in various studies support Laitin’s claim (Graney, 1999; Grävingholt, 1999b). Ajupova (1996) reports that more than 100 ethnic groups live in Bashkortostan. Thirteen of these groups (Russians, Bashkirs, Tatars, Chuvash, Mari, Udmurts, Ukrainians, Mordvinians, Belarus, Latvians, Germans, Estonians, Kazakhs) concentrate in certain areas in the Republic. In Table 1, some figures about the numbers and language use of these groups are presented, showing the complicated nature of the linguistic situation in Bashkortostan.

Table 1 Proportion of linguistic groups in Bashkortostan and native language being the first language.

Linguistic group	% of total population	Claiming native language as the first language in 1979 (%)	Claiming native language as the first language in 1989 (%)
Bashkir	22	64.4	74.7
Chuvash	3	86.8	82.7
Mari	2.7	94	91.2
Russian	39	*	*
Tatar	28.4	94.2	92.9
Udmurt	0.6	93.2	90
Ukrainian	1.9	**	**

Source: Ajupova (1996). * Expected to be 100%. ** The figure is not given but language loss among Ukrainians is also reported to be high (3.5% between 1979 and 1989).

As seen from Table1, the native language is decreasingly claimed to be the first language by all groups, except the Bashkir group. Bashkirs reported an increase in mother tongue use from 1979 to 1989 of 10%. However, the Bashkir people have the lowest percentage of claiming their mother tongue as their first language in their own homeland. Graney (1999) reports that 20% of Bashkirs claimed Tatar as their first language in 1989, while only 0.5% of Tatars claimed Bashkir as their first language. According to Grimes (2000) 370,000 Bashkirs speak Tatar as a mother tongue. In contrast, only 0.25% of ethnic Russians claim any knowledge of either Tatar or Bashkir. On the basis of the figures in Table 1, an outsider is inclined to think that Russians are the largest ethnic group in Bashkortostan. However, linguistically speaking, there is no substantial difference between Bashkirs and Tatars; both languages are mutually intelligible. The division is socio-political, which was the result of planned Russian policies, rather than linguistic and cultural. The above figures also show that ethnic Russians in Bashkortostan are characterized by complete monolingualism. In other words, mother tongue use and

consciousness among the Bashkir people seems to be lower as compared to other ethnolinguistic groups in Bashkortostan.

Current situation

Language planning has a crucial role in the maintenance or loss of languages. As seen in the Soviet context, many native languages were limited to the domestic domain, which lessened their functional and instrumental values in society. Because there were no educational institutions offering instruction in the home language, parents were obliged to send their children to Russian medium schools so that their children could achieve educational and social mobility. However, in the context of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, some federal republics formulated their own language policies and these new policies bolstered positive attitudes towards the mother tongue (Guboglo, 1994). Bashkortostan and Tatarstan are typical examples for language revitalization. Even though the instrumental value of Russian is still very high, the societal support for Bashkir-medium education is increasing. The success of any language policy is dependent upon societal support and positive attitudes.

The key informants reported that there are serious efforts to reform the educational system in Bashkortostan. Bashkir intellectuals and policy makers consider educational reform an essential prerequisite for state sovereignty. Policy makers in Bashkortostan want to reform public schools by re-writing school textbooks and by adding new subjects to the curriculum. For this purpose, the former Soviet Academy of Sciences was 'nationalized' to relocate the production of cultural and historical knowledge away from Moscow. In this way, policy makers want to control the means of the production of public knowledge and its dissemination through the educational system. New courses on Bashkir history, culture and literature were introduced in the academic year of 1990/91. The Ministry of Education created a new institute, *Kitap*³, to design textbooks for Bashkortostan's schools in 1997.

As far as the teaching of native languages is concerned, the Bashkir language policies aim at serving all linguistic groups in the Republic. All ethnolinguistic groups are entitled to establish their own schools and offer instruction in their own languages. In this respect, the Republic of Bashkortostan satisfies the demands of multilingualism. All parents are encouraged to demand for native language instruction for their children. In principle, all languages are equal before the legislation and there has been a considerable increase in the number of native language educational institutions in Bashkortostan over the past five years (Graney, 1999). In spite of these positive developments, some Bashkir intellectuals are not satisfied with what has been achieved so far. They suggest that there should be a full-fledged national education in the Bashkir language from pre-school to higher education. Official response to these criticisms was offering plans for more schools where the medium of instruction was entirely Bashkir. Nevertheless, Bashkir language was not made compulsory for non-Bashkir children. In this respect, principles of multilingualism apply to all native languages in Bashkortostan.

The figures presented in Table1 show that compared to other ethnolinguistic groups, the Bashkir group has the lowest percentage of speaking the native language as the first

language. In spite of this high language shift (compared to other groups), language revitalization efforts in Bashkortostan are rather strong. This can be attributed to the presence of strong intellectual elites in the society. The top-down political support for the Bashkir medium-schools seems to be influential as there is an increase in the number of students attending Bashkir schools. The push for Bashkir-medium universities is also increasing. In this climate of language revitalization, the use of the Bashkir language can be expected to be more vital. In this respect, bottom-up support is highly important. If there is more demand for Bashkir-medium schools, the vitality of Bashkir could still increase. In connection with the objective data presented in this section, another important dimension is the role of Bashkir language media. There are now a number of Bashkir newspapers, magazines, journals and books. Many of these newspapers and journals have reached serious circulation numbers in a short period of time: *Shonkar* (youth journal, circa 25.000), *Amanat* (journal for school children, circa 25.000), *Akbuzat* (journal for primary school children, 15.000), *Bashkortostan Kizi* (journal for young girls, 35.000), *Agidel* (a literary journal, circa 35.000), *Bashkortostan Ukytyusy* (journal for teachers). In addition to these Bashkir-language journals, there are two newspapers in Tatar language and one tri-lingual newspaper *Vatandash (Citizen)* printed in Bashkir, English, and Russian. The number of films and plays produced in Bashkir has also increased considerably. In the same vein, Bashkir music cassettes and CDs seem to be becoming very popular.

As seen in the Bashkir case, new language laws caused an increased mother tongue consciousness among Bashkir people. Attitudes towards Bashkir and Russian changed dramatically. In the next section, the factors contributing to the vitality of a language will be outlined so that the process of Bashkir language revitalization can be fully understood.

Subjective data on ethnolinguistic vitality in Bashkortostan

The sociolinguistic situation in Bashkortostan has been briefly described in the previous section along with Edwards' (1992) typology. The objective data show that strong measures have been taken to revitalize Bashkir and other minority languages in Bashkortostan. In this climate, one would expect a strong language revitalization process. However, community support for the native language is critical. Given the fact that Russian still plays the role of *lingua franca* in Bashkortostan, many parents might (still) want to send their children to Russian-medium schools for pragmatic reasons (a good university education, job prospects, and so on). A group's ethnolinguistic vitality can be described by using objective data as presented above but the group members' subjective vitality needs to be strong for language revitalization to take place. Given the fact that the Bashkir language group went through severe Russification processes in the last century, one could expect a very low subjective vitality among the Bashkir speakers. Also, the fact that languages other than Russian had very few domains of use, the functional and instrumental values of Bashkir or Tatar were very limited. Under these 'negative' circumstances, it is difficult to expect high vitality measures among the group members.

Instrument and informants

In order to determine the subjective views of the group members, a Russian translation of the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire of Bourhis *et al.* (1981) was employed⁴. We deliberately chose a Russian-language questionnaire, instead of Bashkir, because according to our key informants, most of the young informants did not have enough proficiency in Bashkir. The questionnaire involved rating the Russian and Bashkir groups on 22 items, measuring group vitality on the dimensions of status, demographic, and institutional support factors respectively. Respondents rated Russian and Bashkir vitalities on 7-point *Likert Scales*. In the questionnaire, 1 stood for lowest vitality, while 7 stood for the highest vitality. The ordering of Russian and Bashkir scales were counterbalanced across the 22 items and bipolar (positive - negative) ratings, which were reversed on alternate questions. In the context of this research project, a home language survey was also conducted with 484 school children but other than some relevant data, the findings of that study will not be reported here (see Aznabaeva, Pustogacheva and Khruslov, 2001).

The questionnaire was administered to 250 informants in and around Ufa⁵. Thinking that, as an effect of Russification, Bashkir language use would be more common in rural than urban communities, two groups of respondents from rural and urban backgrounds were targeted. The data from Ufa constituted the urban data, while the data from villages around Ufa constituted the rural data. Accordingly, 87 informants from urban areas (mean age = 31.3) and 137 informants from rural areas (mean age = 25.9) completed the questionnaire. The number of female informants (155) was more than male informants (90), while 5 informants did not provide any gender information.

Results

In Table 2, the findings of the survey are reported. Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality ratings of 250 informants (urban and rural altogether) are presented. In the statistical analysis of the data, *SPSS* (Version 9) has been used. In the first column, the variables as included in the questionnaire are given. In the second column, Bashkir informants' vitality ratings (*Mean* values) of the own, i.e., Bashkir group are presented. In the third column, Bashkir informants' vitality ratings of the Russian group are given. Following earlier research using the subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire, the data were also subjected to factor analysis. This analysis led to an uninterpretable multi-factor solution. A t-test between Russian and Bashkir vitalities (the significance of difference between the second and third column) has been computed (see columns four and five).

Table 2 Subjective ethnolinguistic vitality ratings of Bashkir informants for Russian and Bashkir vitalities (N = 250)

Questionnaire variables	Bashkir vitality	Russian vitality	Mean difference	<i>P</i>
1. Proportion of Population	3.49	4.64	1.15	.000**
2. Perceived language status local	6.12	5.52	-.59	.000**
3. Perceived language status international	4.10	3.28	-.82	.000**
4. Amount of Bashkir/Russian in government services	3.73	6.06	2.32	.000**
5. Russian/Bashkir birth rate	3.82	4.07	.23	.060

6. Russian/Bashkir control over business	5.32	5.06	-.27	.048*
7. Amount of Bashkir/Russian in mass media	2.88	2.12	-.74	.000**
8. Perceived group status	5.82	4.29	-1.50	.000**
9. Proportion of Russian/Bashkir locally	3.51	5.00	1.50	.000**
10. Amount of Bashkir/Russian in schools	4.78	6.14	1.36	.000**
11. Russian/Bashkir immigration patterns	4.39	3.68	-.71	.000**
12. Amount of exogamy	4.48	4.97	.50	.000**
13. Amount of Russian/Bashkir political power	2.98	3.38	.40	.005**
14. Amount of Bashkir/Russian in business	3.97	5.84	1.86	.000**
15. Russian/Bashkir emigration pattern	4.49	4.54	5.809E-02	.722
16. Pride of cultural history	5.95	5.13	-.81	.000**
17. Amount of Bashkir/Russian in religious worship	3.29	3.22	-6.5306E-02	.693
18. Evaluation of group's cultural representation	5.75	5.19	-.55	.000**
19. Perceived group strength	4.87	5.31	.44	.015*
20. Perceived group wealth	3.93	5.08	1.15	.000**
21. Predicted future strength	5.32	5.18	-.16	.275
22. Amount of contact between Russian and Bashkir	5.59			

Notes: 1 indicates minimum vitality, while 7 indicates maximum vitality.

There are significant differences between the vitality measures for the Bashkir and Russian groups. The differences are not always uni-directional. In some cases, e.g. proportion of population, the vitality of Russian is higher compared to Bashkir vitality. In another case, e.g. perceived local language status, the vitality of Bashkir is higher compared to Russian vitality. In order to see the difference between Bashkir and Russian vitalities, for each informant a vitality score was computed. On the basis of the individual scores a total score for each group is calculated and these are turned into a Russian vitality and a Bashkir vitality scale. The Cronbach alpha for the scales was not very high ($\alpha = .73$). A *t-test* between Bashkir and Russian scores showed that Russian vitality is significantly higher than Bashkir vitality. Given the fact Russian enjoys considerable institutional support in education and in all public institutions this difference is not surprising. Table 3 presents the *t-test* results.

Table 3 T-test results between Russian and Bashkir vitalities.

Dimension	Mean	SD	T	P
Russian vitality (N = 229)	97.86	8.70	170.2	.000
Bashkir vitality (N = 228)	93.07	9.97	140.9	.000

Considering that Bashkir language use was more common in rural areas than urban areas in the Soviet period, Bashkir vitality was, and still is, presumed to be higher among the rural informants. In the same vein, Russian vitality is expected to be lower among the same informants. In order to see the difference between the informants from rural and urban backgrounds on their ratings of Bashkir and Russian vitalities, an ANOVA test was

computed. Following the SPSS compute procedure, sum scores for each of the Bashkir and Russian vitalities were obtained. Between these two scores an ANOVA test was computed. In Table 4, ANOVA results on rural versus urban informants' Bashkir and Russian vitality ratings are presented.

Table 4 ANOVA results on Bashkir and Russian vitality (N = 208)

Dimension	Area	Mean	SD	F	P
Russian vitality	Urban (n = 77)	99.03	7.32	3.078	.081
	Rural (n = 131)	96.81	9.58		
Bashkir vitality	Urban (n = 78)	91.66	9.05	.315	.575
	Rural (n = 130)	92.43	9.92		

Although there seems to be a slight tendency for a higher Russian vitality in urban areas ($p = .081$), as opposed to our expectations, on the group level, there are no significant differences between these two groups' ratings of Russian and Bashkir vitalities. In other words, irrespective of their background (urban versus rural), Bashkir informants perceived Russian and Bashkir vitalities similarly.

Against the background of massive Russification efforts over the years, especially the above average vitality outcomes with respect to the Bashkir group can be considered remarkable. Where one could have expected low vitality outcomes going hand in hand with ongoing processes of language shift, it turns out that language revitalization and maintenance efforts in Bashkortostan among other things seem to have their bearing on positive subjective ethnolinguistic vitality feelings of the people.

Discussion

Our findings show that the Bashkirs' group-esteem is rather high. In terms of *demographic factors*, the informants' ratings are in line with the objective data, for instance, in terms of the proportion of the population (item number 1 in the questionnaire in Table 2), informants report that Russians are more in numbers than Bashkirs. Accordingly, Russian birth rate (item number 5) is reported to be higher than Bashkirs.

In terms of *status factors*, Bashkirs are afforded significantly higher vitality ratings than Russians. A t-test between the vitality of Bashkir and Russian in terms of both local (item number 2) and international language status (item number 3) of Russian and Bashkir show significantly higher vitality for Bashkir language group. This is an intriguing finding as Russian is acclaimed to be an international language of science and technology. In the same vein, in terms of Russian and Bashkir group status (item number 8) in Bashkortostan and cultural pride (item number 16) of respective groups, Bashkirs have significantly higher vitality. Finally, the vitality ratings on groups' cultural representation (item number 18) indicate much higher vitality ratings for the Bashkir group. Apparently, feelings of Bashkir sovereignty affected the group esteem in a very positive way. In terms of economic status of the Bashkir and Russian groups, Russian vitality is higher on perceived group wealth (item number 20). Russian's *lingua franca* role in Bashkortostan is explicit in item number 14 that Russian is much more used than Bashkir in business.

In terms of *institutional support factors*, there are significant differences between Bashkir and Russian vitalities. In line with the objective data, as far as the amount of Bashkir and Russian used in government services (item number 4) and the amount of Bashkir and Russian used in schools (item number 10) is concerned, the vitality of Russian is significantly higher. Nevertheless, Bashkir having been made the other official language in Bashkortostan might add to the vitality perceptions of the group members. The Bashkirs have more control over business than Russians (item number 6). Overall, the amount of contact between Russian and Bashkir groups is perceived to be rather high (item number 22). This finding is significant in terms of cross-cultural communication and the establishment of multiculturalism in Bashkortostan.

Future Prospects of Bashkir language revitalization

From the above findings, it might be concluded that the Bashkir people want to revitalize their mother tongue. In order to achieve full language revitalization, all social-psychological, educational, and constitutional conditions are favorable in Bashkortostan. By means of top-down support (educational policies) and bottom-up willingness (parents demanding Bashkir-medium instruction), the Bashkir language could be established as a full-fledged school language in the (near) future.

Nevertheless, there are many linguistic, cultural, political, social and demographic factors, which need to be taken into consideration in the language revitalization process. The role of education in the mother tongue is the most important. During our fieldwork in Bashkortostan, we visited some Bashkir schools in Ufa and a Tatar school in the village of Nurlino⁶. During interviews with school directors and policy makers, we observed a strong willingness to increase the number of hours for mother tongue instruction. Along with Bashkir language classes, schools offer classes on Bashkir culture. The number of subjects that are taught in the Bashkir language is increasing. Students learn Bashkortostan geography and history in the Bashkir or Tatar language. However, the use of the Cyrillic alphabet makes the learning and teaching of Bashkir more difficult. Some scholars, whom we interviewed, suggested that there might be a shift to the Latin alphabet as in neighboring Tatarstan. They expressed the view that the use of the Latin script would also make communication with other neighboring Turkic languages (such as Kazakh, Uzbek, Kirghiz, etc.) much easier. However, Russian being the national language, and having almost all the official public documentation in Russian make the shift to a Latin script a very difficult task.

The findings of this study regarding native language revitalization in Bashkortostan are highly important. In order to further advance the vitality of native languages in Bashkortostan, Bashkir medium universities and Bashkir teacher training programs are essential. For multiculturalism to take root in the community, ethnic groups should be encouraged to learn each other's language and culture. As documented in the previous sections, in creating a multilingual Bashkortostan, yet, the task of being bilingual or trilingual is considered to be the responsibility of native Bashkir or Tatar children. The great majority of the Russian group (not only in Bashkortostan) continues being

practically monolingual. If real multilingualism is to be achieved, school children from an ethnic Russian background should be encouraged to learn other groups' languages, or at least one other native language of Bashkortostan. In this way, social cohesion and cross-cultural communication between different ethnic groups would be enhanced, and the goal of creating a multicultural and multilingual Bashkortostan would become easier.

This study, finally, has shown the value of combining objective and subjective ethnolinguistic vitality data gathered by using Bourhis *et al.*'s subjective ethnolinguistic vitality questionnaire and Edwards' typology of minority language situations as a valid indicator of ever developing sociolinguistic situations as in the case of Bashkortostan. In order to see the relationship between subjective perceptions of community members and actual results of the revitalization efforts, a replication of this study after some years might be highly relevant. Furthermore, inclusion of Tatar informants (rating Bashkir, Russian and Tatar) might be highly interesting and illuminating.

References

- Ajupova, L. (1996) Funktionirovanije jazykov v sfere obrazovanija respubliki Baškortostan (Functioning of languages in education sphere in Republic of Bashkortostan) In: V. Solntsev & V. Mikhachenko (eds) *Sociolinguistic problems in various Regions of the World*. Moscow: Institute of Linguistics, Russian Academy of Sciences, pp. 49-54.
- Aznabaeva, F., Pustogacheva, O & Khruslov, G. (2001) Obščie svedenija o sistemax obrazovanija i rezultati obsledovanija jazikovoi situacii v semjax i skolax respublik Altai, Baškortostan i Goroda Moskvyy. (Introduction to the language situation and results of the family and school surveys in Altai, Bashkortostan and Moscow). In: G. Khruslov & S. Kroon (eds) *Multilingualism, Mother Tongue Education and Educational Policy: Russian Federation Case Studies*. Moscow: Institute for National Problems of Education, pp. 10-68.
- Bourhis, R. Y. and Sachdev, I. (1984) Vitality Perceptions and Language Attitudes: Some Canadian Data. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology* 3, 2, 97-127.
- Bourhis, R. Y., Giles, H. & Rosenthal, D. (1981) Notes on the Construction of a 'subjective vitality questionnaire' for Ethnolinguistic Groups. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 2, 2, 145-155.
- Carmichael, C. (2000) Coming to Terms with the Past: Language and Nationalism in Russia and its Neighbours. In: S. Barbour & C. Carmichael (eds) *Language and Nationalism in Europe*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 264-279.
- Clyne, M. (2003) *Dynamics of Language Contact: English and Immigrant Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cooper, R. L. (1989) *Language Planning and Social Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, J. (1992) Sociopolitical aspects of language maintenance and loss: towards a typology of minority language situations. In: W. Fase, K. Jaspaert, & S. Kroon (eds) *Maintenance and Loss of Minority Languages*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Co, pp. 37-54.

- Giles, H. & Viladot, A. (1994) Ethnolinguistic identity in Catalonia. *Multilingua: Journal of Cross-Cultural and Interlanguage Communication*, 13, 301-312.
- Giles, H., & Johnson, P. (1987) Ethnolinguistic Identity Theory: A Social Psychological Approach to Language Maintenance. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 68, 69-99.
- Giles, H., Rosenthal, D., & Young, L. (1985) 'Perceived Ethnolinguistic Vitality: The Anglo- and Greek-Australian Setting'. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 6, 3-4, 253-269.
- Giles, H., Bourhis, R. Y., & Taylor, D. M. (1977) Towards a Theory of Language in Ethnic Group Relations. In: H. Giles (ed.) *Language, Ethnicity and Intergroup Relations*. London: Academic Press, p. 307-348.
- Giles, H. & Powesland, P.F. (1975) *Speech Style and Social Evaluation*. London: Academic Press.
- Graney, K. E. (1999) Education Reform in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan: Sovereignty Projects in Post-Soviet Russia. *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 4, pp. 611-632.
- Grenoble, L. & Whaley, L. J. (1998) Toward a typology of language endangerment. In: A. Grenoble & L. J. Whaley (eds) *Endangered languages: language loss and community response*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Pp. 22-54.
- Grimes, B. F. (2000) *Ethnologue: The Languages of the World*. 14th edition. (Internet edition: <http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/>).
- Grävingholt, J. (1999a) *Regionale Autonomie und postsowjetischer Autoritarismus: Die Republik Baschkortostan*. Teil I: Politischer Umbruch und Neuordnung der Institutionen. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien 16. Köln: BIOst.
- Grävingholt, J. (1999b) *Regionale Autonomie und postsowjetischer Autoritarismus: Die Republik Baschkortostan*. Teil II: Herrschaftspraxis und föderale Beziehungen. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien 17. Köln: BIOst.
- Guboglo, M. (1994) *Sprachengesetzgebung und Sprachenpolitik in der UdSSR und in den Nachfolgestaaten der UdSSR seit 1989*. Berichte des Bundesinstituts für ostwissenschaftliche und internationale Studien 32. Köln: BOIS.
- Haarman, H. (1992) Measures to increase the importance of Russian within and outside the Soviet Union – a case of covert language-spread policy (a historical outline). *International Journal of Sociology of Language*, 95, pp. 109-129.
- Hagendoorn, L., Drogendijk, R., Tumanov, S., & Hraba, J. (1998) Inter-ethnic preferences and ethnic hierarchies in the former Soviet Union. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 483-503.
- Harris Russell, A.S. (2001) Towards predicting ethnolinguistic vitality: A sociocultural approach. In: T. Ammerlaan, M. Hulsen, H. Strating, & K. Yagmur (eds) *Sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic perspectives on maintenance and loss of minority languages*. Münster / New York: Waxmann.
- Johnson, P., Giles, H., & Bourhis, R. Y. (1983) The Viability of Ethnolinguistic Vitality: A Reply. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 4, 4, 255-269.
- Laitin, D. D. (1995) Identity in formation: the Russian-speaking nationality in the post-Soviet diaspora. *Archives of European Sociology*, XXXVI, 281-316.

- Paulston, C. B., & Chen, C. P. (1993) Language regeneration: A conceptual overview of language revival, revitalisation and reversal. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 14, 4, 275-286.
- Pittam, J., Gallois, C., Willemyns, M. (1991) Perceived Change in Ethnolinguistic Vitality by Dominant and Minority Subgroups. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, Vol. 12 (6): 449-457.
- Schlyter, B. N. (1998) New Language Laws in Uzbekistan. *Language Problems and Language Planning*. Vol. 22, No. 2, pp. 143-181.
- Smolicz, J.J. (1984) Minority languages and the core values of culture: Changing policies and ethnic response in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 5, 1, 23-41.
- Smolicz, J.J., Secombe, M.J. & Hudson, D.M. (2001) Family collectivism and minority languages as core values of culture among ethnic groups in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 22, 2, 152-172.
- Tajfel, H. (1974). Social Identity and Intergroup Behavior. *Social Science Information*, 13, 65-93.
- Willemyns, M., Pittam, J., & Gallois, C. (1993) Perceived Ethnolinguistic Vitality of Vietnamese and English in Australia: A Confirmatory Factor Analysis. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 14, 6, 481-497.
- Yagmur, K. (2001) Investigating language shift and language revival in Altai: Towards and explanatory framework. In: G. Khruslov & S. Kroon (eds) *Languages of family and school*. Moscow: Report of the NWO Russian-Dutch Research Cooperation Project (No. 047.007.15), pp. 143-159.
- Yagmur, K. (1997) *First language attrition among Turkish speakers in Sydney*. (Studies in Multilingualism, 7), Tilburg: Tilburg University Press.
- Yagmur, K. de Bot, K. & Korzilius, H. (1999) Language attrition, language shift and ethnolinguistic vitality of Turkish in Australia. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 20, 1, pp. 51-69.

Appendix-1: list of questions based on Edwards (1992) taxonomic typology

The numbers and concentration patterns of speakers
 Language use profiles in rural and urban settings
 Socioeconomic status of speakers (of Bashkir and Russian)
 Patterns of language transmission and/or acquisition (Bashkir and Russian)
 Previous and present language maintenance and revival efforts
 Linguistic capabilities of speakers (*for which a home language survey was used*)
 Degree of language standardization
 Nature of in and out migration of respective groups
 Language attitudes of speakers
 Aspects of language-identity relationship (whether ethnic language is seen as a core value by the group members)
 The attitudes of respective groups towards each other
 History of the area and the background of the respective groups in the region
 History of the language
 Rights and recognition of speakers

Degree and extent of official recognition of respective languages and also functional value of these in social life (in education, public institutions, social life and so on)
Degree of autonomy of the area
Religion of respective groups and the importance of religion for the groups
Type and strength of association between language and religion
Association between respective languages and economic status
Economic profile of the region (also the income source of respective groups)
Group and language representation in the media
Dominant group's attitudes towards the minority language/s.

¹ This research is carried out in the framework of the Dutch-Russian cooperation project "Multilingualism, Mother Tongue Education and Educational Policy: Russian Case Studies", which is funded by the Dutch National Science Foundation (NWO) with the project number 047.007.15.

² We are grateful to Flioura Aznabaeva, Markhaba Davletchina, and Dilya Khisbulina of the Institute of National Problems of Education in Ufa for their willingness to provide us with the necessary information.

³ Turkic word meaning book.

⁴ We are grateful to Georgii Khruslov of the Institute for National Problems of Education in Moscow for translating the questionnaire into Russian.

⁵ We are grateful to Flioura Aznabaeva, Markhaba Davletchina, and Dilya Khisbulina for their cooperation in data collection.

⁶ The schools visited were Bashkir National School No. 20 and No. 136 and Bashkir Republican Gymnasium in Ufa and the National Tatar School in Nurlino.